



## FINDING AID

# **FIRE MANAGEMENT RECORDS**

### **1919-Present (bulk dates: 1950-2007)**

Prepared by  
Lee Steiner, Frances Harrell & Brian Davis  
August 25, 2011

Yellowstone National Park Archives  
P O Box 168  
Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190-0168

Catalog Number: YELL 199771

***TABLE OF CONTENTS***

Copyright and Restrictions .....	ii
History .....	1
Scope and Content .....	3
Hierarchy .....	5
Series Descriptions .....	6
Container List .....	8

## ***COPYRIGHT AND RESTRICTIONS***

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted materials. The various state privacy acts govern the use of materials that document private individuals, groups, and corporations.

Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a reproduction if the document does not infringe the privacy rights of an individual, group, or corporation. These specified conditions of authorized use include:

- non-commercial and non-profit study, scholarship, or research, or teaching
- criticism, commentary, or news reporting
- as a NPS preservation or security copy
- as a research copy for deposit in another institution

If a user later uses a copy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," the user may be personally liable for copyright, privacy, or publicity infringement. This institution's permission to obtain a photographic, xerographic, digital, or other copy of a document doesn't indicate permission to publish, exhibit, perform, reproduce, sell, distribute, or prepare derivative works from this document without first obtaining permission from the copyright holder and from any private individual, group, or corporation shown or otherwise recorded.

Permission to publish, exhibit, perform, reproduce, prepare derivative works from, sell, or otherwise distribute the item must be obtained by the user separately in writing from the holder of the original copyright (or if the creator is dead from his/her heirs) as well as from any individual(s), groups, or corporations whose name, image, recorded words, or private information (e.g., employment information) may be reproduced in the source material. The holder of the original copyright isn't necessarily the National Park Service. The National Park Service is not legally liable for copyright, privacy, or publicity infringement when materials are wrongfully used after being provided to researchers for "fair use."

This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if fulfillment of the order is judged in violation of copyright or federal or state privacy or publicity law.

## ***HISTORY***

Ever since its inception in 1916, the National Park Service's mandate to preserve as well as use the national parks has made fire management issues difficult.

- 1916 – Congress provided almost no funding to the National Park Service for fighting fires so they were forced to turn to the U.S. Forest Service for assistance because they controlled the majority of funding for federal fire response until the 1960s. This dependency meant that the National Park Service had to adopt the Forest Service's ideas about fire being the mortal enemy and all fire being bad for the land.
- 1916-1933 – Fire Protection, the art of recognizing fire and quickly responding with a suppression strategy. Because there were not enough resources to devote to the standard fire suppression methods Yellowstone National Park built two fire lookout towers, one on Mount Washburn and the other on Mount Sheridan, to actively watch for the beginning signs of fires.
- 1927 – The Forest Protection Board was created to coordinate fire management activities among the various federal agencies. The board required all national parks to have fire control plans which dictated reporting requirements, emphasized the need for cooperation with other agencies, and provided instructions for the maintenance of communication sets and other equipment.
- 1929 – The National Park Service initiated their own fire control plan that was derived from the Forest Service plan but was unique to the national parks.
- 1933 – With the start of the New Deal programs the National Park Service finally had the resources they needed to start distancing themselves from the Forest Service's views of fire and implement their own fire management plans.
- 1933-1942 – The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) greatly helped in fighting fires in Yellowstone.
- 1935 – Wildlife scientists started to challenge the National Park Service's policy of total fire suppression and of having the CCC clear brush and remove trees. The scientists insisted that this impeded wildlife patterns, altered the terrain, and generally disrupted natural cycles. Responsibility for fighting building fires moved from Maintenance division to Ranger division in Yellowstone.
- 1950s – The National Park Service started to pull away from the Forest Service model of fire study and fire suppression and started to focus on fire prevention and fire education.
- 1965 – As part of the Elk and Habitat Management Plan, Yellowstone started to experiment with controlled burning to restore historic elk ranges.
- 1968 – The National Park Service's Green Book was published. It contained the administrative policies for natural areas within a park. It stated that fires would be allowed to run their course when they remained within pre-established boundaries and contributed to land management objectives. The National Park Service changed its fire fighting policy to move away from the Forest Service's view to one of fire actually being good for the ecosystem. The national parks became a testing ground for intentionally ignited fires and experiments in letting natural fires burn.

- 
- 1969 – The Boise Interagency Fire Center (BIFC) was established which united the Bureau of Land Management with the Forest Service. In 1993, BIFC changed to the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC).
  - 1973 – The National Wildfire Coordinating Group started. They brought together every aspect of fire management under one standardized group that included multiagency fire planning and training.
  - 1977 – The NPS's Fire Policy Directive (NPS-18) came out and superseded all previous fire management policies. It stated that the National Park Service's priorities were to protect lives, facilities, and cultural properties and to preserve natural resources and habitat. It also had clear guidelines for prescribed burning. It separated fires into two categories: management fires, which were allowed to burn and wildfires, which were suppressed.
  - 1988 – National Park Service Director William Penn Mott declared a freeze to all prescribed burns in the national park system due to public outcry over fires in Yellowstone.
  - 1989 – Because of the 1988 Yellowstone Fires, a complete review of NPS-18 was ordered and all natural fires were to be suppressed until new fire management plans could be developed.
  - 1995 – A revised fire policy was completed. It emphasized indirect attacks on fires and allowed for flexibility in types of responses. The National Park Service changed from looking at the origin of the fire to looking at its circumstances as the basis for decision making on how to deal with the fire. It led to greater coordination and cooperation among federal land management agencies.

There have been a few minor changes to the fire management policy since 1995. Since there is potential for growth, changes in policy might occur so updates will be made to this collection.

## ***SCOPE AND CONTENT***

### **FIRE MANAGEMENT RECORDS**

1919-Present (bulk dates: 1950-2007)

***CATALOG NUMBER*** YELL 199771

***VOLUME*** 43.5 LF

***DESCRIPTION*** This record group contains materials that relate to the fire management policies and the fires that occurred within Yellowstone National Park and the Greater Yellowstone Area from 1919 to the present.

The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) established a set of standards for how all fire incident documentation should be organized. This plan was used in conjunction with the National Park Service's records retention schedule to determine if a record is to be kept permanently or only temporarily and then destroyed. In this collection, all records designated as permanent were kept along with those temporary records of sufficient intrinsic value or uniqueness to have considerable historic and research value.

The Fire Cache Administration Series contains correspondence, interagency policies and agreements, fire lookout tower logbooks, and fire lookout tower map tools.

The Wildland Fire Management Series consists of fire prevention educational materials from the World War II era, fire presuppression activities and organization, and wildland fire fuels management project files.

The Fire Management Reports Series contains the monthly and annual fire reports, lookout tower reports, initial fire reports, fire planning documents, final fire summary reports and reviews, incident narratives, fire maps and GIS data, and final statements of cost.

The Weather Data Series includes data on fuel moisture levels, weather reports, fire weather predictions and reports, and weather observations made out in the field.

The Media series consists of press releases, newspaper clippings, infra-red photographs, negatives, slides, training photographs, visual recordings on reels and VHS tapes, and audio recordings.

*ORGANIZATION*

Organized into five series: Series I, Fire Cache Administration; Series II, Wildland Fire Management; Series III, Fire Management Reports; Series IV, Weather Data; Series V, Media.

Series V, Media is divided into three sub-series: Sub-Series A, Media Coverage; Sub-Series B, Photographic Images; Sub-Series C, Visual & Audio Recordings.

*PROVENANCE*

These records were created by the Yellowstone National Park Fire Cache.

*RESTRICTIONS*

NO

*ASSOCIATED  
MATERIALS*

Yellowstone National Park Combined Archives: RG 03-1988, 1988 Fire Records

***HIERARCHY***

I. Fire Cache Administration, 1924-2007

II. Wildland Fire Management, 1929-2007

III. Fire Management Reports, 1919-2007

IV. Weather Data, 1935-2007

V. Media, 1939-2007



## ***SERIES DESCRIPTIONS***

### *I. Fire Cache Administration, 1924-2007*

The contents of this series include correspondence about fire management work, the development of policies, training, reviews of situation reports, and interaction with the public. There are also interagency fire management policies, cooperative agreements between the National Park Service and other state and federal agencies, and materials about the Wildland Urban Interface Project. Fire Lookout log books have handwritten entries describing daily activities performed at the Mt. Washburn, Divide, Pelican Cone, Mt. Holmes, and Mt. Sheridan towers. There are also fire lookout map tools which are stiff transparencies with marking on them that depict seen-area observations made from towers in 1946.

### *II. Wildland Fire Management, 1929-2007*

This series contains records documenting the educational and interpretive activities used to inform the public about the prevention of wildfires from the World War II era, the planning and preparation for work to be done to manage fires, and project files on prescribed fires and burn plans to reduce fuel loads.

### *III. Fire Management Reports, 1919-2007*

Within this series are monthly and annual fire management reports that summarize the fire events for that period, reports from fire lookout towers, and individual fire reports. There are forms used to summarize key fire incident information such as the location of the fire, date it was reported, date it was declared out, and often small maps of the fire and a short narrative summary of the incident. Post-incident administrative reviews, often labeled "critiques", documented the degree of success that was achieved in managing specific fires. Final incident narratives described events in the course of managing a fire that needed more explanation than was stated in the standard fire incident forms. The fire maps and GIS electronic data are final fire perimeter maps, final fire progression maps, or show final status of incidents. Some maps were made into bundles or an atlas format and would contain maps and charts along with plans on how to deal with an incident or the fire's history. There are also final statements of cost that were incident specific comprehensive cost summaries.

#### IV. Weather *Data*, 1935-2007

This series contains handwritten data from direct weather observation by the park fire cache, 10-day weather records, fire weather records and observations, fire weather reports, and fuel moisture data.

#### V. *Media*, 1939-2007

The media formats within this collection include official press releases about fires, daily fire update e-mails, and newspaper articles covering park fires. The photographs and negatives are of fire management operations, fires, fire fighting personnel and equipment, fire training operations, aerial infra-red imagery of fire hot spots, and slides used in fire training school classes that showed fires and fire fighting methods. There are also VHS tapes and film reels of fire fighting operations, fire weather observations, news briefings, training exercises, and interviews as well as audio recordings of fire reviews.

***CONTAINER LIST*****Series Nbr****Series Title**

01

Fire Cache Administration

**Box Nbr****Title**

1

Administrative Correspondence, 1924-1972

2

Administrative Correspondence, 1976-2000

3

Interagency Management Plans and Agreements, 1940-1993

4

Interagency Management Plans and Agreements, 1994-2007. Wildland Urban Interface Project, 2001-2003

5

Fire Cache Daily Logbooks, 1959-1968

6

Fire Cache Daily Logbooks, 1968-1970

7

Divide Lookout Tower Logbooks, 1958-1964. Mt. Washburn Visitors' Register, 1967-1969

8

Mt. Holmes Lookout Logbooks, 1958-1974

9

Mt. Holmes Lookout Logbooks, 1975-1981

10

Mt. Sheridan Lookout Logbooks, 1938-1960

11

Mt. Sheridan Lookout Logbooks, 1965-1984

12

Mt. Washburn Lookout Logbooks, 1942-1967

13

Mt. Washburn Lookout Logbooks, 1968-1979

14

Mt. Washburn Lookout Logbooks, 1980-1984. Mt. Washburn Visitors' Register, 1984-1985

15

Pelican Cone Lookout Logbooks, 1958-1975

16

Fire Lookout Map "seen area" transparencies, 1946 [oversized]

**Series Nbr****Series Title**

02

Wildland Fire Management

**Box Nbr****Title**

1

Fire Prevention and Fire Presuppression, 1931-1960

2

Fire Presuppression, 1961-1987

3

Fire Presuppression, 1989-2004

4

Fire Presuppression, Training Materials and Manuals, 1939-2001

5

Wildland Fire Fuels Management, 1929-2006

6

Wildland Fire Fuels Management and Structural Protection, 1950-2007

7

Wildland Fire Fuels Management, Project File – Norris Prescribed Fire, 2007

**Series Nbr****Series Title**

03

Fire Management Reports

**Box Nbr****Title**

1

Monthly, Annual, and Multiple Season Fire Management Reports, 1931-2003

2

Fire Lookout Reports, 1942-1992. Initial Fire Reports, 1975-2007

3

Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSa) and Wildland Fire Implementation Plan (WFIP), 1926-2007

4

Delegation of Authority and Return of Delegation of Authority, Transfer of Command, 1974-2001

5

Final Fire Reports, 1931-1932

6

Final Fire Reports, 1926-1943

7

Final Fire Reports, 1944-1969

8

Final Fire Reports, 1970-2007

9

Final Fire Reports and Incident Summaries, 1966,-2007

10	Fire Reviews, 1953-2000
11	Final Incident Narrative, 1926-1994
12	Final Incident Narrative, 1995-2007
13	Maps, 1919-2007
14	GIS Data CD-Rs, 2000-2003
15	GIS Data CD-Rs, 2003-2007
16	Final Statement of Costs, 1929-2003

Series Nbr	Series Title
04	Weather Data

Box Nbr	Title
1	Fuel Moisture & FBAN Data 1981-2007
2	Field Weather Observations, 1966-2003
3	AFFIRMS Data: Fire Weather Observations, 1983-1998
4	AFFIRMS Data: Fire Weather Observations 1977-1982. Fire Weather Reports, 1971-1998
5	10-day weather records, 1954-1976
6	Burn Index & Lightning Occurrence 1958-1968. Fire Weather Observations, 1935-1940. Fire Weather Observations, 1945-1975
7	Fire Weather Log, 1935-1940

Series Nbr	Series Title
05	Media

Sub-Series Nbr	Sub-Series Title
A	Media Coverage

Box Nbr	Title
1	Press Releases, 1976-2007
2	News Coverage, 1924-2007

Sub-Series Nbr	Sub-Series Title
B	Photographic Images

Box Nbr	Title
3	Fire Training School Photos & Negatives, ca. 1958
4	Photographs, 1931-2004
5	Glass Slides, 1939-1953
6	Slides, 1931-1974
7	Aerial Photo Stereo Slides, 1974
8	Slides, 1974-2000

Sub-Series Nbr	Sub-Series Title
C	Visual & Audio Recordings

Box Nbr	Title
9	VHS Tapes # 1-11

Tape Nbr	Description
1	Broad Fire – Yellowstone National Park, July 10 & 11, 2002
2	Polecat Fire, 9/23/87
3	Stone WFRB-YNP (Afternoon) 8/21/01 & 8/24/01 Yellowstone Fire
4	9/24/94 Robinson

	5	Polecat Fire on Quiet Day
	6	1987 Prescribed Burn 1. Bunsen Peak 2. Hellroaring
	7	Prescribed Fire-Yellowstone, 1986-87
	8	Rattlesnake PNF 3/93
	9	S-190 1. Fire Weather 2. Introduction to Fire Behavior 3. Fire-Weather Observation 4. Forrest Fires and Water
	10	Fire Weather Observations for Fire Danger
	11	Fire Weather Observations for Fire Danger
10		VHS Tapes # 12-22
	<b>Tape Nbr</b>	<b>Description</b>
	12	OPS Section CH. Briefing, 3/15/90
	13	Fire Attack # 1, 2, 3
	14	Fire Attack # 4, 5, 6
	15	First Attack Fire Boss Aspen Valley Josen Initial Attack IC Eagles Nest Merritt
	16	Lower Mtn. Cabin Completed, 7/30/98
	17	Air Operations Crew Shuttles, Slingload Lamar – CBS Aerial Recon
	18	Helosafe – Heli Passenger Briefing – Prop Strike – Aircraft Accident Synopsis
	19	Risk Assessment Low Flight – High Skill
	20	Rainy Day Options Duhnkrack Duhan Adams
	21	Pelican Fish Will Blast
	22	Handtools Escape Plans Survive Wildfires
11		VHS Tapes # 23-33
	<b>Tape Nbr</b>	<b>Description</b>
	23	Extreme Fire Behavior
	24	Fireline Safety Refresher Training, April 10, 2003
	25	RI Hotshot Short Haul Training (Bahr/Mellot)
	26	Helirappelling Training
	27	By Natures Rules
	28	Discovery Station, 01/21/98
	29	Lifeline to a Fireline the BIFC Story, July 1985
	30	Wildfire, 12-9-90 TBS
	31	Avalanche, Gallatin National Forest
	32	Was That a Wolf?
	33	1. Light Hand on the Land 2. Slide Presentation, 3-87 R-6 Fire Staff conference/ Phil Perkins
12		VHS Tapes # 34-44
	<b>Tape Nbr</b>	<b>Description</b>
	34	BBC Firetape 1992 Pelican Blast/Daly Creek
	35	CNN Interview w/ IC Steve Frye
	36	U.S. Forest Service Smoke in the Valley, the summer of 1985
	37	From Beneath the Ashes
	38	Wildfire Journal Master vol. 1
	39	Wildfire Journal Master vol. 2
	40	Wildfire Journal Master vol. 3
	41	Wildfire Journal Master vol. 4
	42	Wildfire Journal Master vol. 5
	43	Panorama Fire the Burning of Western America
	44	Butte Fire Shelter Deployment, 1985
13		16 MM Reels # 1-3
	<b>Reel Nbr</b>	<b>Description</b>
	1	Fires
	2	1974 Natural Fires
	3	1974 Natural Fires (Raven, Bluff, Willow Fires)

- 14 16 MM Reels # 4-12
- | Reel Nbr | Description  |
|----------|--|
| 4        | Divide Fire Aerials  |
| 5        | Aerial Views of Fire – New Feature at Mud Volcano            |
| 6        | Reproduction Fire, Arrow Fire                                |
| 7        | Aerials of Fires   |
| 8        | Divide Fire  |
| 9        | Reproduction Fire  |
| 10       | Fire   |
| 11       | Natural Fire, Interview with Bob Sellars and Ken Davis, 1976 |
| 12       | Divide Fire, 1976  |
- 15 8 MM Reels # 1-32
- | Reel Nbr | Description                                    |
|----------|--|
| 1        | Arrow Fire 7/1 – 7/3/76                        |
| 2        | Arrow Fire 2 <sup>nd</sup> roll 7/4/76         |
| 3        | Aspen Burn Yankee Jim Canyon Gallatin N.F.     |
| 4        | Beaver Heart Mt. Sheridan                      |
| 5        | Beaver-Heart from Mt. Sheridan                 |
| 6        | Crowfoot                                       |
| 7        | Divide fire, 7/27 – 7/28                       |
| 8        | Divide fire roll 1, 7/12-7/16                  |
| 9        | Divide fire, 7/27/72                           |
| 10       | Fawn fire 1975                                 |
| 11       | Gallatin Fire                                  |
| 12       | Gallatin Fire camera #1                        |
| 13       | Gallatin Fire #1, 6 days                       |
| 14       | Gallatin Fire, July 26-30, 1978, site #1       |
| 15       | Gallatin Fire camera #1, 8/2/78                |
| 16       | Gallatin Fire, July 27 to Aug 2, 1978, site #2 |
| 17       | Gallatin #2, 4 days                            |
| 18       | Gallatin fire camera site #2                   |
| 19       | Gallatin #3                                    |
| 20       | Jacks Fire                                     |
| 21       | Jacks Fire, Sept 1-4                           |
| 22       | Lewis Fire 1 <sup>st</sup> week, 9/10-9/17     |
| 23       | Lewis Fire                                     |
| 24       | Doug Haacke, Mt. Washburn, 1979                |
| 25       | Washburn                                       |
| 26       | Washburn                                       |
| 27       | Washburn                                       |
| 28       | Washburn #2                                    |
| 29       | Washburn #1                                    |
| 30       | Washburn                                       |
| 31       | Trail Cr 10/3                                  |
| 32       | Pelican Fire, 1977                             |
- 16 Mini-DV, Helical Scan Reels, Film Reels # 1-6
- | Reel Nbr | Description                                     |
|----------|---|
| 1        | Broad Fire, 7/12                                |
| 2        | 1975 Fires, Fawn Fire                           |
| 3        | River CR, Willow CR, 7/26                       |
| 4        | Fires and Fire Camp, Yellowstone                |
| 5        | Fires   |
| 6        | “Shown in Auditorium with Pageant, Spring 1981” |

17

Audio Cassette Tapes # 1-10

<b>Tape Nbr</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	1981 Fire Review 1
2	1981 Fire Review 2
3	1981 Fire Review 3
4	1981 Fire Review 4
5	1981 Fire Review 5
6	1981 Fire Review 6
7	1981 Fire Review 7
8	Fire Review – Arrow 1, 2
9	Fire Review – Arrow 3
10	Fire Review – Arrow 4